

REPTILES



Although reptiles are classified among the higher vertebrates, the form of many of them is so reminiscent of life on Earth hundreds of millions of years ago that they may justifiably be regarded as living relics of those times...

— Z. Vogel
Reptile Life



REPTILES

Taxonomy in the reptile checklist follows that in the field guide to eastern and central North American species by Conant and Collins (1991). Species are listed alphabetically under each family. As in the amphibian checklist, specific subspecies are occasionally listed. We followed this practice when only one subspecies is known from the state and there is no question as to its identity. Common names follow Crother, *et al.* (2000).

The final revision of the Wisconsin checklist contains 35 reptile species in 9 families. All 35 species are native. None are currently listed as endangered or threatened at the federal level. One turtle, 1 lizard, and 4 snakes are listed as endangered at the state level, and 2 turtles and 1 snake are considered threatened at the state level.

Excluded Reptile Species

We exclude Plains Hognose Snake (*Heterodon nasicus nasicus*) and Smooth Earth Snake (*Virginia valeriae*) from the Wisconsin checklist. These species are known from Wisconsin from only one or two specimens (Vogt 1981, Casper 1996). Most herpetologists believe it is doubtful that these species occur in breeding populations anywhere in the state, and their occurrence can be considered accidental.

The Wisconsin Herpetological Literature

The literature on Wisconsin's reptiles is extensive and rich; records have been published in a variety of journals, bulletins, and other outlets. Dlutkowski, *et al.* (1987) provided a bibliography of 360 papers, notes and articles dealing with the ecology, life history, distribution, history, and status of Wisconsin amphibians and reptiles. More than 140 additional works are included in an update to that bibliography (Watermolen 1992). An on-line version of the bibliography is now available on the Milwaukee Public Museum's web site (<http://www.mpm.edu/>). Update of the bibliography is an on-going cooperative project.

Reptile Survey and Atlas Efforts

The *Wisconsin Herpetological Atlas Project* tracks the distributions of reptiles (and amphibians) in Wisconsin. The Milwaukee Public Museum, Inc. with the cooperative support of the DNR's Bureau of Endangered Resources and the Nature Conservancy initiated the Herpetological Atlas Project in 1986. The Herpetological Atlas is producing a computerized database of reptile distribution, based on records obtained from museum collections, field surveys, literature, and field notes provided by volunteer observers throughout the state. Over 800 endangered and threatened species records have been received, and over 450 new county records have been confirmed since the project began. The data collected help in mapping species distributions, documenting rare species occurrences, analyzing population trends, examining habitat requirements, and planning conservation priorities. Preliminary results of the Herpetological



Atlas Project are presented in Casper (1996, 1998). For more information on the Herpetological Atlas Project, readers are encouraged to visit the project's web site (<http://www.mpm.edu/>).

Class Reptilia: Reptiles

Order Testudines: Turtles

- Family Kinosternidae: Mud and Musk Turtles
 - Sternotherus odoratus* Stinkpot
- Family Chelydridae: Snapping Turtles
 - Chelydra serpentina serpentina* Eastern Snapping Turtle
- Family Emydidae: Semi-aquatic Pond and Marsh Turtles
 - Chrysemys picta* Painted Turtle
 - ST** *Clemmys insculpta* Wood Turtle
 - ST** *Emydoidea blandingii* Blanding's Turtle
 - Graptemys geographica* Northern Map Turtle
 - Graptemys ouachitensis*⁸ Ouachita Map Turtle
 - Graptemys pseudogeographica*⁸ False Map Turtle
 - SE** *Terrapene ornata ornata* Ornate Box Turtle
- Family Trionychidae: Softshell Turtles
 - Apalone mutica* Smooth Softshell Turtle
 - Apalone spinifera* Spiny Softshell Turtle

Order Squamata: Lizards and Snakes

Suborder Sauria: Lizards

- Family Teiidae: Whiptails and Racerunners
 - Cnemidophorus sexlineatus* Six-lined Racerunner
- Family Scincidae: Skinks
 - Eumeces fasciatus* Common Five-lined Skink
 - Eumeces septentrionalis septentrionalis* Northern Prairie Skink
- Family Anguidae: Glass Lizards
 - SE** *Ophisaurus attenuatus attenuatus* . . Western Slender Glass Lizard

Suborder Serpentes: Snakes

- Family Colubridae: Colubrids
 - Carphophis vermis* Western Wormsnake
 - Coluber constrictor*⁹ Eastern Racer
 - Diadophis punctatus* Ring-necked Snake
 - Elaphe obsoleta obsoleta* Black Ratsnake

⁸ The two species of *Graptemys*, *ouachitensis* and *pseudogeographica*, were previously considered subspecies of *G. pseudogeographica*, but are given full species status by Vogt (1980, 1993). While some authorities (e.g., Ernst and Barbour 1989, Ernst, *et al.* 1994) agree that the two taxa merit species status, other herpetologists (e.g., Conant and Collins 1991) have not yet embraced this change. We think the evidence is compelling and treat *ouachitensis* and *pseudogeographica* as separate species.

⁹ Wisconsin populations of this species have typically been classified as the Blue Racer (*Coluber constrictor foxi*), but Oldfield and Moriarty's (1995) recent classification of Minnesota specimens as Eastern Yellow-bellied Racer (*C. c. flaviventris*) calls this designation into question (Casper 1996). Additional work with Wisconsin specimens is needed in order to assign the correct subspecies. The recently adopted regulations covering reptiles (NR 19.26, Wis. Admin. Code) refer to Racers (*C. constrictor*).



Family Colubridae: Colubrids (*continued*)

<i>Elaphe vulpina</i>	Western Foxsnake
<i>Heterodon platirhinos</i>	Eastern Hog-nosed Snake
<i>Lampropeltis triangulum triangulum</i> ..	Eastern Milksnake
<i>Nerodia sipedon</i>	Northern Watersnake
<i>Ophedrys vernalis</i>	Smooth Greensnake
<i>Pituophis catenifer</i> ¹⁰	Bullsnake
SE <i>Regina septemvittata</i>	Queen Snake
<i>Storeria dekayi</i>	DeKay's Brownsnake
<i>Storeria occipitomaculata occipitomaculata</i> ..	Northern Red-bellied Snake
ST <i>Thamnophis butleri</i>	Butler's Gartersnake
SE <i>Thamnophis proximus</i>	Western Ribbonsnake
<i>Thamnophis radix</i>	Plains Gartersnake
SE <i>Thamnophis sauritus septentrionalis</i> ..	Northern Ribbonsnake
<i>Thamnophis sirtalis</i>	Common Gartersnake

Family Viperidae: Pit Vipers

<i>Crotalus horridus</i>	Timber Rattlesnake
SE <i>Sistrurus catenatus catenatus</i>	Eastern Massasauga

¹⁰ The taxonomy of this species remains confusing. Collins (1990) uses the species name *catenifer*. While some authorities (e.g., Oldfield and Moriarty 1995) have chosen to follow this convention in an attempt to maintain consistency, others (e.g., Casper 1996, Conant and Collins 1991) have retained *melanoleucus*. The recently adopted regulations covering reptiles (NR 19.26, Wis. Admin. Code) refer to Bullsnares (*P. melanoleucus sayi*). Crother, *et al.* (2000) use *P. c. sayi*.



Primary Reptile References: Christophel, *et al.* 2000, Casper 1996, Conant and Collins 1991, Vogt 1981, Pentecost and Vogt 1976 (as well as references cited in Watermolen 1992 and Dlutkowski, *et al.* 1987).

